

# THE STATUS REPORT

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## MCSW to Honor Community Unsung Heroines on March 3:

*They don't make the news, they make the difference!*

### Third Annual Unsung Heroines Award Luncheon March 22!

Two Hundred and Forty women, chosen to be their community's Unsung Heroine of 2006, will be celebrated by The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women at a reception in their honor at the State House on March 3, 2006 at 1 p.m.

The Community Unsung Heroines of 2006 are those who use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others. They are women who don't make the news, but make the difference, explains Helen Corbett, MCSW Commissioner and Chair of the Unsung Heroines Initiative.

The State House reception is a prelude to the Commission's 3rd Annual Unsung Heroines Award Luncheon, which will be held on Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. Extraordinary statewide luncheon honorees will be chosen from the larger community group being celebrated on March 3. All are welcome to join the MCSW and emcee Liz Brunner at this event. Tickets cost \$75 each. Reservations and sponsorships can be made at [www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women) or by contacting the MCSW at 617-626-6520 or by sending an e-mail to [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us). You may also send a check, made payable to the MCSW, to the Commission office at 19 Staniford Street, 6<sup>th</sup> FL, Boston, MA 02114.

The March 22<sup>nd</sup> luncheon is the Commission's signature event and each year raises funds for a special project that would otherwise be outside the Commission's budget. This year the MCSW will use the proceeds to augment and expand the **MA Women's Resource and Referral Network**, an interactive Web based resource that puts the information that MA women and families need at their fingertips. Thus corporate and business sponsorships are much needed and many opportunities are available. The MCSW is a 509(a)(1) non-profit so ticket costs and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

#### GO TO

[www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women)

to view

*the list of this year's 240  
Community Unsung Heroines*

*A .pdf document is also  
available for download!*

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## Executive Director Corner

### *Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams*

When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, then Gov. Lester Maddox (R-GA) was incensed when flags were flown at half-staff. Thirty-eight years later, in her death, Coretta Scott King made history becoming the first African-American *and* the first woman invited to be laid in honor in Georgia's state Capitol.

March 1<sup>st</sup> marks the beginning of Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the successes of the past, recognize today's accomplishments and, as we continue to strive towards equality, acknowledge the ongoing journey women face. Women's history is a story of inspiration and hope; a story of courage and tenacity; and a story of promise, possibility and purpose.

By celebrating women's historic achievements, we present an authentic understanding and appreciation of history. The stories of women's accomplishments illustrate the complexity and contradiction of living a full and purposeful life. Learning about women's history provides an expansive vision of what women can do -- a perspective that both encourages women and girls to think bigger and bolder, and also gives men and boys a fuller understanding of the female experience.

Women's history has been enriched by a number of women we've lost since last year's celebration.

Dale Messick (1906 - 2005): syndicated comic strip artist who created "Brenda Starr" in 1940 featuring the first career woman heroine.

Anne Bancroft (1931 - 2005): award winning actress who won an Oscar, an Emmy and a Tony award and is best known for her portrayals of Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate* and of Anne Sullivan Macy in *The Miracle Worker*.

Molly Yard (1912 - 2005): key organizer of the campaign to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, President of the National Organization for Women and instrumental in efforts to support Title IX and its provisions to prohibit sex discrimination in federally funded education programs.

Dr. C. Delores Tucker (1927 - 2005): civil rights activist, founder of the organization that became the National Congress of Black Women, served as the first African-American Secretary of State in the US in Pennsylvania from 1971 - 1977 and instituted the first Commission on the Status of Women.

Rosa Parks (1913 - 2005): civil rights advocate whose arrest for refusing to get up from her bus seat triggered the Montgomery Bus boycott.

Coretta Scott King (1927 - 2006): worked to promote the vision and mission of her late husband -- tirelessly campaigning for fifteen years for a federal holiday commemorating his work and dreams.

Betty Friedan (1921 - 2006): founder of the National Organization of Women, the National Women's Caucus and the National Abortion Rights Action League, key leader in the struggle to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and author of the groundbreaking book *The Feminine Mystique*.

Continued on Pg. 3

## Executive Director Corner Continued – Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams

These women's legacies have, and will, continue to shape, influence and inspire generations of women including the 200+ women being honored as the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women's 2006 Community Unsung Heroines at the State House on Friday.

While many Massachusetts women are witnessing improvement in their economic, political and social status, serious obstacles to their equality remain and too many women are being left behind. In particular, low income women, women of color and women in rural areas face special challenges accessing resources and services.

The 2006 Massachusetts Community Unsung Heroines recognize that despite our progress, serious work remains. Building upon the legacies of their fore-sisters, these women are driving change -- one day at a time -- work that only years later may be truly appreciated and recognized as "historic." In so doing, they embody the spirit and belief in one woman's ability to make a difference -- to make history.

Women's history is our nation's story. It is the story of how women built communities, inspired and nurtured dreams and how they will continue to do so for many, many years to come.

*"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do."* Eleanor Roosevelt (1884 - 1962)



MCSW Commissioner

## March is National Women's History Month

The MCSW will join national, regional and local organizations in celebrating National Women's History Month in March. This year's theme is *Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams*, which intimately connects with several MCSW initiatives this month.

In 1987, in recognition of women's many accomplishments throughout history, the U.S. Congress designated the month of March as National Women's History Month. A variety of agencies, schools, and organizations observe the month by focusing on the "consistently overlooked and undervalued" role of American women in history.

The significance of the month of March dates to the mid-19th century when, on March 8, 1857, a group of female garment workers in New York City staged a protest to demand better working conditions and pay. Police aggressively halted the demonstration, but several years later the determined women formed their own union. In 1911, March 19 was observed as International Women's Day (IWD) to acknowledge women's continuing struggle for recognition and rights. The date of IWD was changed to March 8 in 1921. In 1978 the schools of Sonoma county, California, named March Women's History Month as a means of examining women's history, issues, and contributions. The idea gained momentum, and in 1981 a congressional resolution proclaimed the week surrounding March 8 National Women's History Week. In 1986 the National Women's History Project played a significant role in the expansion of the observance to the entire month of March.

## Celebrate International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>

### *Shifting the Paradigm: Paths to Women's Political Leadership in the United States*

The public is cordially invited to this year's International Women's Day Celebration, which will be held Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at Simmons College in the Linda K. Paresky Conference Center, from 7:30-9 a.m.

Featured speakers include: Linda Dorcena Forry, State Representative, 12<sup>th</sup> Suffolk District; Lida E. Harkins, State Representative, House Majority Whip; Charlotte Golar Richie, Chief of Housing, City of Boston; Mary S. Rogeness, State Representative, Assistant Minority Leader; and Dessima Williams, Sociology Professor, Brandeis and Women's Rights Activist.

Join these women and others in discussions on how women's political leadership in the U.S. can be grown and how to pave the way to get more women elected to political offices. We all know that more women in elected offices will affect women and families throughout the nation in a positive way. All decisions will be positively impacted and our local communities will reap the benefits.

A continental breakfast will be served and a suggested donation of \$5.00 will be gratefully accepted at the door. Please RSVP to Diane Hammer at [diane.hammer@simmons.edu](mailto:diane.hammer@simmons.edu).



Pictured at left is the **Working Coalition for International Women's Day**. Members, L to R, include Diane Hammer, Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change; Lindsay Snyder, The Women's Union; Vjollca Behluli of Kosovo; Olga Reisman, Irish Immigration Center; Alma Morrison, United Nations Association of Greater Boston; Audley Green, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Linda Brantley, MA Commission on the Status of Women; Marie Turley & Patricia Nickerson, Boston Women's Commission; and Elizabeth Corcoran, MA Women's Political Caucus.

### *Did you know?*

Feb 6, 1973 - Government Printing Office rules that the prefix "Ms." is acceptable optional identifying label in government publications

**-National Women's History Project**

## MCSW Legislative Updates

### Health Education Bill

*An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools (S.1641)*, endorsed by the MCSW in October, faces its crucial next step. The Joint Committee on Education is currently debating the bill and will then decide whether or not the bill progresses to the full legislature for a vote.

Please join the MCSW and the Coalition for Youth to help move this important piece of legislation forward. Tell legislators that young people need access to this information in order to make responsible decisions, prevent disease, reduce risky behaviors, and lead healthy lives.

#### What does this bill do?

- This bill makes comprehensive health education part of the core curriculum for Massachusetts Public Schools.
- School districts would be required to teach age-appropriate health education in grades K-12.
- The bill's definition of "Health Education" is based on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum Frameworks that were developed by the Department of Education under the Education Reform Act of 1993.
- The fourteen standards covered by the bill are nutrition, physical activity, mental health, safety and injury prevention, reproduction and sexuality, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, consumer health, growth and development, family life, interpersonal relationships, disease prevention, ecological health, and community health.

#### Three Ways to Support the Health Education Bill

- Write letters to the members of the Joint Committee on Education urging them to support the health education bill.
- Make phone calls to the members of the Joint Committee on Education urging them to support the health education bill.
- "Letter to the editor campaign," write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and/or an op-ed in support of the health education bill.

#### Members appointed to the Joint Committee on Education include:

**State Senator's** Antonioni of Worcester and Middlesex; Augustus of Second Worcester; Wilkerson of Second Suffolk; Resor of Middlesex and Worcester; Spilka of Second Middlesex and Norfolk; and Brown of Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex.

**State Representative's** Haddad of Somerset; Creedon of Brockton; Petersen of Marblehead; Kujawski of Webster; LeDuc of Marlborough; Wolf of Cambridge; Nyman of Hanover; Patrick of Falmouth; Walz of Boston; Perry of Sandwich; and Ross of Wrentham.

Call them at (617) 722-2070 or visit their Web site: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/comm/j14.htm>

**For more information on MCSW's legislative activity, please contact:**

**Jill Ashton, MCSW Outreach Coordinator E-mail: [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us) / Phone: 617-626-6520**

#### INTERESTING FACT!

**Feb 9, 1973** - First convention of National Women's Political Caucus meets in Houston, TX

### *The MCSW Welcomes a New Commissioner: Linda Cavaoli of Worcester*

Linda Cavaoli, Executive Director of the YWCA of Central Massachusetts since 1992, was recently appointed to the MCSW by Senate President Robert Travaglini. Linda oversees the daily operations of a \$4.3 million non-profit organization dedicated to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism.

Linda is active in the community and serves as a member on the board of directors of the United Way of Central Massachusetts and Edward Street Children's Services. She is also a member of the Martin Luther King Community Breakfast Committee, City Manager's Task Force on Bias and Hate Crimes, United Service Executives, Worcester Rotary Club and Worcester Women's History Project. She also has served as regional chairman of the YWCAs of New England Council and is a member of the National Association of YWCA Executives. Currently Linda is the Chair of the YWCA USA Regional Leadership Committee.

Before joining the YWCA, Linda was the Senior Vice President of Marketing and Resource Development at the United Way of Central Massachusetts. The MCSW welcomes Linda and her central MA representation.

## Commission Corner

### *Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women*

The Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women is the first of its kind commission that is not city-based but rather county-based. It was created through legislation proposed by Senator Andrea Nuciforo and based on research completed at North Adams' Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). The legislation passed in September of 2004 and the inaugural slate of nine Commissioners were appointed following an interview process in March of 2005.

The Commission held its first formal meeting in April of 2005 with an agenda of being both programmatically and legislatively focused. The Programs and Planning sub-committee has focused its efforts thus far on issues related to girls at-risk understanding that, for example, Berkshire County has amongst the highest teen pregnancy rates in nation. In November of 2005, the Commission hosted a countywide forum of service providers to understand the issues confronting young girls and ways in which the Commission can be helpful in advocating for legislative and monetary resources.

The Legislative sub-committee has met since the inception of the Commission with a goal of advocating for broader issues effecting women and girls in Berkshire County. Because of the rural nature of the County's geography, issues of poverty, transportation, affordable housing, and education are of particular interest. The entire Commission is scheduled to meet on March 6 with its Berkshire Legislative Delegation to begin a dialogue regarding these critically important issues. The Legislative sub-committee will then meet with the Caucus of Women Legislators on March 28 to continue this dialogue.

The Commission has been fortunate to maintain its relationship with MCLA as its president, Dr. Mary Grant, is the County's representative on the State Commission on the Status of Women and has served as a key supporter of, and link between, the works of the Berkshire Commission with the state Commission.

Although the Berkshire has only just celebrated its one-year anniversary, it looks forward to continuing its critical work of providing an effective and meaningful voice for issues impacting the lives of women and girls in Berkshire County.

For additional information, contact Pam Malumphy, Chair at [pmalumphy@verizon.net](mailto:pmalumphy@verizon.net), or (413) 445-5351.



## Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings

⇒ **March 3, 2006: MCSW 2006 Community Unsung Heroine Awards**

To be held at the Massachusetts State House, Boston, MA

⇒ **March 8, 2006, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: International Women's Day**

To be held at Simmons College, Boston, MA

⇒ **March 22, 2006: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual MCSW Unsung Heroine Awards Luncheon**

Tickets are now on sale at [www.mass.gov/women](http://www.mass.gov/women)



For a complete listing of events please visit [www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm](http://www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm)

If you have an event that you would like added to our future newsletters, or Web site, please e-mail the information to:  
[Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us](mailto:Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us)

### Commission Officers & Members FY 2006

**Kathleen Casavant, Chair, Chelsea**

Linda Cavaoli, Worcester

Martha Chadwick, Boston

Gloria Coney, Roxbury

Lianne Cook, Salem

Helen Corbett, Danvers

Donna Finneran, Mattapan

Marianne Fleckner, Westford

Mary Grant, PhD, North Adams

**Catherine Greene, Esq., Secretary, Brighton**

**Elizabeth Houlihan, Vice-Chair, Falmouth**

Helen Jackson, MD, W. Roxbury

Judith Kurland, Brookline

Roseanna Means, MD, Wellesley

Angela Menino, Hyde Park

Carol Pimentel, New Bedford

Susana Segat, Cambridge

**Greer Tan Swiston, Treasurer, Newton**

### Commission Staff & Interns

Linda Brantley, Executive Director

Paula Daddona, Program Manager

Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator

Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

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**Do you have questions or comments about this newsletter? If so, please contact  
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